

Beckham Theft Charge Pending

JFK Probe Brings Out
1961 Jeff Case

Sources in Jefferson Parish revealed Friday that Thomas E. Beckham, witness in the Garrison investigation of the assassination of President John F.

Kennedy, has a theft charge pending against him from 1961 in Jefferson.

Clerk of court records in Gretna show Thomas E. Beckham and Orville Beckham, a brother, both living at 3129 Gen. Meyer, Algiers, were arrested in July, 1961, for systematic

theft of about \$12,000 in cash and merchandise from the Halpern's Fabrics Store in the Westside Shopping Center. Orville Beckham was manager of the store at the time, and Thomas Beckham was employed in Halpern's Lakeside store. Merchandise taken was al-

legedly being used by the brothers to stock two stores they intended to open in Gretna, authorities said at the time.

Orville Beckham served a year of probation for the theft, but Thomas was never brought to trial. The last court entry on the case was Jan. 30, 1963, when the trial of Thomas Beckham was continued because he was a patient at the Mandeville State Hospital.

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Another aspect of the case learned Friday concerned Dr. Wayne Owens, a native of Louisiana and a former intern at the Louisiana State University Medical School.

Dr. Owens, now a resident physician at the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison, related the story of a psychology professor who treated a woman patient at Mandeville four days before Kennedy was murdered.

Dr. Owens quoted the professor as saying the woman mentioned the name "Jack Rubenstein" (later shortened

to Jack Ruby), and suggested that Ruby posed a possible threat to Kennedy's life.

RUBY BLAMED

After the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination, Owens continued, the professor told his students that while he was with the woman the day of the killing, she further warned that Ruby, not Lee Harvey Oswald, was the President's killer. He said her statements came before Ruby broke into the news by shooting Oswald in the Dallas police station basement.

In New Orleans, assistant District Attorney James Alcock

said that a woman who allegedly worked as a stripper in Ruby's Dallas nightclub was brought to the Mandeville hospital awhile after the assassination. Alcock identified her as Miss Rose Chermie, and said that she gave statements at the hospital similar to those told to Dr. Owens by the professor.

Alcock further said that the district attorney's office received information on Miss Chermie and her statements early in the investigation of Kennedy's death.

The probe into Miss Chermie's

claims ended, however, when she was killed in a car accident in 1965, added Alcock. He did not know of Dr. Owens' story until Thursday, and he indicated that a memorandum on the subject sparked new interest here in this aspect of the case.

Charges brought against Thomas Beckham here were for theft of \$1,876.04 in merchandise. Court records show that his brother was charged with theft of \$6,500 in merchandise and \$5,500 in cash.

Thomas Beckham is scheduled to appear before Orleans Parish Grand Jury Feb. 15, after having been ordered by an Omaha, Neb., court to return to New Orleans as a material witness.